



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTS WILCOX AND RAGAN WITH REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM TO COMBAT NITRATE ISSUE

Wilcox, Neb., July 21, 2005—The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development awarded \$918,000 to the Village of Wilcox and \$646,000 to the Village of Ragan to assist in costs associated with developing a new regional water system that will initially benefit over 400 rural residents.

“The Village of Wilcox is delighted to see that the funding is underway for the water improvement project,” stated Melinda Ferree, village clerk for Wilcox. “The problem with high nitrates in our water has been ongoing and we have worked several years now trying to find a suitable well site with low nitrate levels. With the USDA Rural Development funding we see our water improvement project starting to become a reality.”

“The Village of Ragan is very happy that the water improvement project is finely taking shape and cannot wait until the project is completed so residents can have a steady supply of safe drinking water,” stated Kelly Winz, chairperson for Village of Ragan.

Total funds will provide for installation of transmission main, costs to develop the new well field, construction of a 75,000 gallon storage tank, installing meters, and for distribution main improvements. The Village of Wilcox will own and operate the new water source.

“Drought conditions have caused the water sources in both communities to have nitrate levels that exceed maximum contaminant levels allowed under the Safe Drinking Water Act,” stated Glen Gatz, community programs specialist for the USDA Rural Development. “It is very gratifying to see communities working together to address this very important issue. The water improvement project will not only restore a source of quality drinking water to the residents of Wilcox and Ragan, but will also provide a water source alternative to those located in the immediate area that are facing the same water quality issues.”

USDA Rural Development Water & Waste Disposal Loan and Grant and Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant programs funded the regional water system. Loan terms are 40 years at 4.25 percent rate of interest.

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